



# The Canal Zone Philatelist



Vol. 37, No. 4

Fourth Quarter, 2001

Whole No. 141

## President's Report

Jim Crumpacker

P.O. Box 1836

Las Vegas, NV 89125

You may have noticed that a hardworking crew of dozens (okay, it was CZSG Secretary John C. Smith, single-handedly) applied a 34 cent stamp to the return envelope sent with the dues notice which you received less than three months ago. It is not that we were shamelessly attempting to provide an inducement to renew your membership for 2002. Rather, the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Canal Zone Study Group is coming up in 2002 and the 34 cents was the first of a number of perks and free offerings which will unfold in the coming months. The Third Quarter 2001 Canal Zone Philatelist revealed a membership of 717 people, some of the 40 folks lately dropped from our lists for non-payment of dues will undoubtedly be recovered with a little prodding. Of those members who continue, the Contributing and Sustaining groups comprise 218, some 30% of the total and certainly a credit to the committed. The regular dues of \$8 per annum remain an outstanding bargain.

I have attempted to do an unscientific analysis of final prices of Canal Zone stamps on eBay, but only on lower priced and obviously genuine material such as plate blocks and earlier inexpensive overprints not known to have been extensively forged. This work was rather more difficult than anticipated, since there is a tendency to knife one's competitor in the back with a last second bid, necessitating

(continued on page 46)

## Pedro Miguel Postal Money Order No. 1 issued and signed by Gerald D. Bliss, postmaster By; Julius Grigore, Jr.

On June 1, 1906, a postal money order system was established by the Canal Zone Postal Service of the Isthmian Canal Commission. Money orders were issued at the various Canal Zone post offices one of which was the Pedro Miguel Post Office under the supervision of Postmaster Gerald D. Bliss. Administrative departments

under the jurisdiction of the Isthmian Canal Commission could also issue Canal Zone Postal Money Orders.

The first postal money orders were on light green paper in a 3-3/8 x 6-5/8 inch format as shown above. The reverse side had an endorsement line and the following two notations:

(continued on page 46)

### COMING CZSG MEETINGS:

**AIRPEX 2002**, Mesa Centennial Hall, Mesa, AZ; on Sat., Feb. 16, at 12 noon.

**WESTPEX 2002**, Cathedral Hill Hotel, San Francisco, CA; on Sat., April 27, at 1pm, room 373. Bring lots of stuff - this is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the CZSG.

**PHILATELIC SHOW 2002**, Holiday Inn at Boxborough, MA; on Sat., May, at 10am, Ivy room.

### In This issue:

Secretary's Report .....	38
Auctions .....	38
2002 Scott's Catalogue .....	39
Scarce OP on U.S. Issues .....	40
Fake OPs on U.S. Issues .....	42
Bridgeless CZ stamp ? .....	47

**The Canal Zone  
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Display advertising accepted from CZSG members only at the following rates per insertion:

One column, two inches	\$10.00
One column, five inches	20.00
Two columns, five inches	35.00

No larger advertisements are accepted. Remittance must accompany copy. Deadline for ads, first day of Mar., June, Sept., Dec. Copy should be sent to the Editor.

Back issues of the journal, handbooks, and other publications can be ordered from Richard F. Murphy, 501 Rosebud Lane, Greer, SC 29650.

Articles and information for publication should be sent to the Editor. Glossy photographs are desirable for figures of stamps or covers; however, enlarged high quality photocopies are sometimes acceptable. Illustrations must show clearly against black backgrounds. If you need help, write, phone, or FAX the Editor. The author must advise the Editor if the article has been published or is being considered for publication elsewhere.

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**Canal Zone Study Group**

Did you know the first flight of a powered aircraft in the Canal Zone was made by Clarence A. de Giers on April 28, 1904. Aviator Robert Fowler flew the first flight over the Isthmus, non-stop, ocean to ocean on April 27, 1913.

Did you know that the Canal Zone Ancon Hospital was renamed to William C. Gorgas Hospital on March 24, 1928.

Did you know on January 25, 1932 the USS *Constitution* made its first journey through the Panama Canal.

**Secretary's Report**

**John C. Smith**

**408 Redwood Ln.**

**Schaumburg, IL 60193-2748**

**TIME TO RENEW  
YOUR MEMBERSHIP**

As of November 10, 2001, our membership stands at 725 members.

The 2002 dues notices have been mailed and you should have received your dues envelopes before you read this. So please help your secretary by mailing in your dues as early as possible, along with any address change. You may have noticed a place to put your CZSG membership number on this year's dues envelope. Entering your CZSG number there would help me update the computer. Your number is on the address label to the right of your name. To save time and trouble you may consider paying your dues for two years or more in advance. Note that we have included return

**Auctions**

**by Jim Crumpacker**

There was one outstanding offering of Canal Zone stamps during the third quarter, July 1-Sept. 30, 2001. It was the Nutmeg sale of some of Lawson Entwistle's material. However, as a mail sale there are no prices realized available from it. The balance of the seasonal auctions were bleak to nearly nonexistent as far as Canal Zone philately was concerned. A few of the latter results are shown below.

As always, the first price given is hammer plus commission, which is followed by the 2001 Scott's Specialized Catalog value in parenthesis.

24c, double overprint, OG, FVF  
\$358 (\$450) Harbour

56a, double overprint, OG, NH, XF  
\$1018 (\$600) Harbour

56g, cpl. bklt. of 2 panes, OG, NH, VG-F, minor cover wear and sm. tear in 1 stamp \$1610 (\$1700) Harmer

67a, ZONE CANAL reading down, OG, NH, VG \$156 (\$850) Harbour

The names and addresses of these two auction firms are shown below. Please credit CZP as your information source, should you request a catalog from either:

Harbour Auctions,  
a division of Matthew Bennett, Inc.  
601 Washington Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21204

H. R. Harmer Inc.  
3 East 28th St., 7th floor  
New York, NY 10016

# 2002 Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps

by Jim Crumpacker

There were some 75 changes or additions in the 2002 Canal Zone listings in *Scott's Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps*. Very few were in the great varieties as it was not a year in which many of these changed hands.

Other revisions were profound. In many cases Scott's has gone to life size illustrations of actual stamps, perforations and all. The clarity of these is quite striking. Some were of items not previously illustrated, such as #14 and CO1 to mention just a couple. One gaffe, if you own a copy of #158 as they show it, my check for \$1000 awaits you in return for your stamp.

Major additions occurred in the wet vs. dry group, #105/114, 117, 138-140, C21-C24, C26, 125. and J27. Separate values for the wet and dry plate blocks are now listed. Generally the "wet" block is the one with the higher price, the two Dues excepted. I have problems with the editors' pricing of the C21-C24 and C26 plate blocks

group. Their opinion is that the wet printing is the one deserving of the higher price. However, this was a short-lived series wherein it is my belief collectors got their "wet" plate blocks at around the time of issue in 1951 and did not necessarily pick up "dry" plate blocks as the years went by. In any event, we see the C26 dry plate block listed at \$35 and the C26a wet plate block valued at \$100! Serious students can fish through the prices realized from CZSG Mail Sales for the past 15 years or so for a comparative analysis if they wish, but no one will find any remote justification for a price of \$100 for a plate block of C26a. Perhaps the Scott's editors have been mining eBay and found that someone is trying to corner the market on this one.

The enhancement to the J25 and J27 separate wet/dry plate blocks listings, in the new catalogue shows different wet/dry prices for these two on cover, a nice touch.

In the basic listings, a TG copy of #15 declines from \$2750 to \$2600, a move entirely justified by auction realizations. A pair on cover of #46, misplaced in the 2001 catalogue and

valued at \$160, is properly positioned in 2002 and priced at \$500. An OG #47 goes from \$3000 to \$3250 in 2002, again a correct move based upon auction results. The OG #97 went from \$42.50 to \$65 which is difficult to explain although VF #97's are not easy to find. The only change in postal stationery was for a used entire of #UX2, up from \$60 to \$80.

Other adjustments included upward revisions in pricing for blocks of 4. But there were some price declines; a selection of the ups and downs is shown below. All in all, the 2002 catalogue is very welcome.

Scott Catalog #	2001 listing	2002 listing
12d, PANAMA		
double, used	\$850	\$1000
48	550	500
54	200	175
57	325	300
64, blk. of 4	210	225
71d, ZONE CANAL	450	500
76, pl. blk./6	550	475
164a, used (tagged)	no list	15
J8, on cover	165	200
J19, pl. blk./6	140	160
J22, pl. blk./6	60	75

United States Postal Service

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- Be sure to furnish all circulation information called for in item 15. Free circulation must be shown in items 15d, e, and f.
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PS Form 3526, October 1999 (Reverse)



## Scarce Booklet Pane Positions

By Richard D. Bates, Jr

The results of a survey of booklet pane positions on flat plate issues (Scott numbers 71e, 73a, 84d, 106a, and 117a) printed by the Bureau of Printing and Engraving were published in the *Canal Zone Philatelist* (CZP 82:3) in 1987. At that time, several positions were found to be very scarce. In fact, no examples of some of these positions had been reported for certain of these issues. And, for two positions, none had been reported for any of the Canal Zone issues. The accompanying table lists a group of booklet pane positions by issue for which none or only one or two was reported at the time of the 1987 survey.

One group of positions is particularly scarce. They are positions M, N, and O, identified by the presence of a horizontal guide line on the tab at the top of the pane. It may be hard to spot, especially in an unexploded booklet, because it is usually at the top of the tab, and in an unexploded booklet it is hard to spot because of the staples. Sometimes, if it is right at the top, you can spot a bit of color without trying to peek beneath the stapled corners of the covers. Position M shows only the guide line at the top. Position N also shows a guide line at right, and position O shows a guide line at both the top and at the left. In the 1987 survey, there were no reported panes on any of the Canal Zone issues for positions N or O. In addition, the only reported examples of position M were eight copies of 106a, though after the survey was completed there was a report of one 84d from position M.

One purpose of this report is to illustrate an example of a Canal Zone booklet pane from position O shown in Fig. 1. This item was "discovered" recently in an APS Sales Circuit book, and shows clearly both the top and left guide lines, and, to the extent the 1987 survey accurately reflected all the known positions in collections at the time, is the first known position O booklet pane for a Canal Zone issue. One purpose of publishing this

article is to encourage members to report any holdings of booklet pane positions listed in the table. If there are significant numbers of previously unreported, or scarce, positions now reported, an updated version of the 1987 survey will be published in a future issue of the CZP.



Fig. 1. Scott No. 117a, position O.

In searching for booklet panes from these positions, one has to be careful to determine that it is really a guide line that is being detected. The top part of two panes of 106a are shown in Fig. 2. At first glance, both might seem uninteresting, appearing to be the most common position A, which exists for 31 of the 60 positions in a 360 subject sheet. (Panels from other positions may appear to be position A if the cutting blade does not include any part of the identifying guide line(s) on the pane.)

On closer inspection, one sees that both panes in Fig. 2. show a bit of red color at the top, raising the possibility that the pane is from the elusive position M. However, only one of them actually is. The example on the left is not from position M, as the red color at the very top is not from a guide line, but is actually the bottom of the stamps of the pane above. In such a case, the red color does not go all the way across; instead it appears in two blocks conforming to the width of the stamps in the pane. To be a position M, N, or O, the color, red in this case, must go all the way across, or, if the pane is cut at an angle, must extend to the edge of the top of the pane, as is the case for the right pane in Fig. 2., which is an example of a position M pane on Canal Zone 106a. The two panes may be equally collectable, one as a position piece, the other as a miscut pane.

A secondary piece of information that helps in identifying a true position M, N, or O versus one for which the color on the tab arises from a miscut pane that catches the bottom edge of the pane above, involves the size of the tab at the top of the pane. (All non-handmade booklet panes issued for the Canal Zone and printed at the Bureau of Printing and Engraving on the flat plate press have the tab at the top.) The tab on a miscut pane showing the bottoms of the two stamps of the pane above is unusually large, as it must include the entire gap between the two panes which is 9.4 mm on this pane. The miscutting of the left pane in Fig. 2. also shows the bottom of the pane slightly reduced, so that the bottom stamps are cut into at the bottom. The tab on the true position M shown at right in Fig. 2 does not need to be as big, as it only needs to extend to

(Continued on next page)

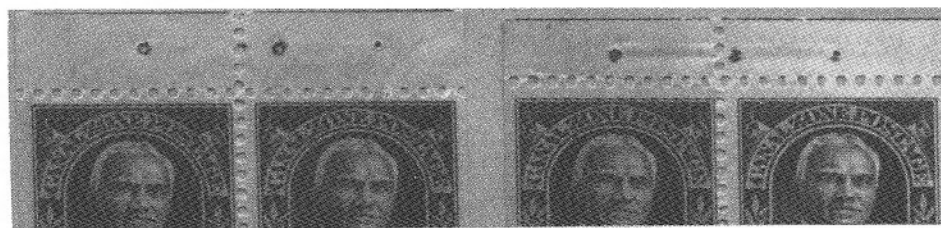


Fig. 2. Tab at top of two 106a panes - miscut at left, position M at right.



the guide line. This guide line is not positioned equidistant between the top and bottom panes, as it is much closer to the bottom of the top pane (0.5 to 0.7 mm, with the guide line approximately 0.3 mm thick) than to the top of the bottom pane, which is 8.2 mm. This measurement is for 106a; the 117a pane in Fig. 1 has a distance of 8.7 mm.

The panes were cut so that finding one with the guide line at bottom (pos. J) is fairly common, while finding one from position M is very unusual. I have one unexploded booklet of Canal Zone 106a for which the top pane is readily identifiable as a position M, one other pane shows a trace of the guide line, but the other two panes in the same booklet show no characteristics identifying them as being from position M, even though all of the panes in a given booklet would come from exactly the same position. An equal number of the two positions (J and M) exists per sheet (there can in principle be as many as eight of each, while only one pane from position N or O is possible from a 360 subject sheet.) Identifying those positions, however, requires that the guideline be visible, which in turn depends on how the cutting blade fell. These panes saved by collectors depended on how easily the position panes were spotted. Whatever the reason, the number of position panes reported in 1987 with guideline at the top is very low, and is a major reason for asking today if any others have now turned up in Canal Zone collections.

Please send information about any of these scarce Canal Zone booklet pane positions to the editor, or to me at either bates@georgetown.edu or at P.O. Box 40583, Washington, DC 20016-0583. Neither photos nor photocopies should be necessary, unless you are uncertain about the position of the pane or are asked to provide it.

## Scarce and Unreported Flat Plate Canal Zone Booklet Panes

### None reported in 1987 survey

<b>Scott No. 71e 1<sup>st</sup> printing</b>	Position B	Guide line and arrow at right
	Position C	Guide line and arrow at left
	Position D	Plate number in tab at top
	Position K	Guide line at right and bottom
	Position M	Guide line at top
	Position N	Guide line at top and right
<b>Scott No. 71e 2<sup>nd</sup> printing</b>	Position O	Guide line at top and left
	Position B	Guide line and arrow at right
	Position L	Guide line at left and bottom
	Position M	Guide line at top
	Position N	Guide line at top and right
	Position O	Guide line at top and left
<b>Scott No. 73a 1<sup>st</sup> printing</b>	Position B	Guide line and arrow at right
	Position C	Guide line and arrow at left
	Position D	Plate number in tab at top
	Position K	Guide line at right and bottom
	Position L	Guide line at left and bottom
	Position M	Guide line at top
<b>Scott No. 73a 2<sup>nd</sup> printing</b>	Position N	Guide line at top and right
	Position O	Guide line at top and left
	Position B	Guide line and arrow at right
	Position C	Guide line and arrow at left
	Position D	Plate number in tab at top
	Position K	Guide line at right and bottom
<b>Scott No. 84d</b>	Position L	Guide line at left and bottom
	Position M	Guide line at top
	Position N	Guide line at top and right
	Position O	Guide line at top and left
	Position B	Guide line and arrow at right
	Position C	Guide line and arrow at left
<b>Scott No. 106a</b>	Position D	Plate number in tab at top
	Position N	Guide line at top and right
	Position O	Guide line at top and left
<b>Scott No. 117a</b>	Position M	Guide line at top
	Position N	Guide line at top and right
	Position O	Guide line at top and left

### Scarce - only one or two reported

<b>Scott No. 71e 1<sup>st</sup> printing</b>	Position I <sup>1</sup>	Guide line at left
	Position L	Guide line at left and bottom
<b>Scott No. 71e 2<sup>nd</sup> printing</b>	Position C	Guide line and arrow at left
	Position D <sup>2</sup>	Plate number in tab at top
	Position K	Guide line at right and bottom
<b>Scott No. 73a 2<sup>nd</sup> printing</b>	Position H	Guide line at right
	Position I	Guide line at left
	Position J	Guide line at bottom
<b>Scott No. 84d</b>	Position L <sup>3</sup>	Guide line at left and bottom
	Position M <sup>3</sup>	Guide line at top
<b>Scott No. 106a</b>	Position D	Plate number in tab at top
	Position L <sup>1</sup>	Guide line at left and bottom

#### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Two of these panes were reported in the 1987 survey. All other entries in this section correspond to one reported pane, except as noted.

<sup>2</sup>One each of plate numbers 15961 and 15964 was reported in the 1987 survey.

<sup>3</sup>Examples of one Scott No. 84d from positions L and M were reported after the compilation of results of the survey, but were added to the published result.

*Recruit a  
New Member!*

# Fake Overprints on Canal Zone Stamps Overprinted U.S. Issues - 1924- 1933

By Richard D. Bates, Jr.

## Part I

### Distinguishing Flat A and Sharp A Overprints

Which of us has not, at some time, looked at a stamp like the one at right at a dealer's booth in a bourse, at the counter in a stamp store, or in an auction or mail sale catalogue, or even on the Internet, and wondered if it was worth taking the chance of buying it because it is a tough to find variety, or even a previously undiscovered or unlisted error. The stamp in Fig. 1. is such a case, and serves to introduce fakes and bogus examples of the series of overprinted U.S. stamps that constituted the first Canal Zone ordinaries issued following the abrogation of the Taft Agreement in 1924.

The Canal Zone overprints used on U.S. stamps fell into two broad classes distinguishable by the appearance of the letters in the overprint, particularly the A's in CANAL, though additional differences exist and will be de-



**Fig. 1. Good variety or  
bogus overprint?**

scribed later. These two overprint types are labeled **flat** and **sharp A** because of these distinguishing characteristics of the tops of the A's. The description of these overprint types in the Scott catalogue is a bit longer: the flat A overprint is termed "Type A Letters "A" with Flat Tops" and the sharp A overprint is labeled "Type B Letters "A" with Sharp Pointed Tops." In the remainder of this text, the simpler sharp A and flat A names will be used.

Full determination of the Scott number to assign to a particular stamp requires examination of both the overprint and, for some values with sharp A overprints, the gauge of the perforations. This also may include an implicit determination of the press on which the underlying stamp was produced.

Table 1 gives all the possible combinations of CZ overprint type, perforations and press on which the stamp is printed, and shows that the Canal Zone overprinted stamps fall into four broad categories. To determine the correct Scott number for a stamp identified as having the design of the U.S. definitives in the 1922-25 series, a simple sequence of steps can be followed.

First, examine the overprint, particularly the A's in CANAL. If the tops of the A's are flat, the stamp belongs in the first group assigned Scott numbers 70-81. If the tops of the A's are pointed, it does not belong in the group 70-81; rather it belongs in one of the three groups with the pointed A's. These can be distinguished by the gauge of the perforations. The first cluster of these is also printed on the

*(continued on next page)*

**Table 1: Scott Number of Canal Zone Ordinaries Created by Overprinting US Stamps of 1922-25**  
(Scott number of US Stamp overprinted given in parentheses)

Press Letters Perf Gauge Value/ U.S.-CZ Cat #	Flat Press Flat A Perf 11 Cat # (US Cat #)	Rotary Press Sharp A Perf 10 Cat # (US Cat #)	Rotary Press Sharp A Perf 11x10 _ Cat # (US Cat #)	Sharp A Cat # (US Cat#)
1/2 cent	70 (US #551)			
1 cent	71 (US #552)	—	—	100 (US #632)
1 1/2 cent	72 (US #553)			
2 cent	73 (US #554)	84 (US #554)	97 (US #583)	101 (US #634)
3 cent Lincoln	—	85 (US #555)	98 (US #584)	102 (US #635)
5 cent	74 (US #557)	86 (US #557)	—	103 (US #637)
10 cent	75 (US #562)	87 (US #562)	99 (US #591)	104 (US #642)
12 cent	76 (US #564)	88 (US #564)		
14 cent	77 (US #565)	89 (US #565)	—	116 (US #695)
15 cent	78 (US #566)	90 (US #566)		
17 cent	—	91 (US #623)		
20 cent	—	92 (US #567)		
30 cent	79 (US #569)	93 (US #569)		
50 cent	80 (US #570)	94 (US #570)		
1 dollar	81 (US #571)	95 (US #571)		
2 cent Sesquicentennial		96 (US #623)		
3 cent Washington	—	—	—	115 (US #720)

flat plate press, and thus, like 70-81, is perforated 11. These are assigned Scott numbers 84-95. If the stamp is printed on a rotary press (rather than the flat press), then it will not be perf 11, and will exhibit the secondary characteristics of rotary press versus flat plate stamps, including gum breaker ridges and elongation in the vertical direction. (See *CZP* 93:30, 1989.) If the rotary press stamps have the sharp A overprint and are perf 10-1/2, then the stamp is in the series 97-99; if instead, it is perf 11 x 10-1/2, then it is in the series 100-104, or is 115-116, depending on the denomination.

The 2 cent and 10 cent values are the only ones in the series of post-Taft Agreement U.S. overprinted stamps that exist overprinted for Canal Zone in all four possible combinations of printing method or press type, overprint type, and gauge of the perforations. An example of each of the four types of the 10 cent value is shown in Fig. 2.



**Fig. 2. Flat and Sharp A Overprints**

The two examples at the top were printed with the flat plate press, are perf 11 and are distinguished by having the flat A overprint as in the example at the left, or sharp A's as in the example at the right. The flat A stamp is Scott No. 75. Each of the three stamps that have a sharp A overprint, can be distinguished by the gauge of the perforations. The top right hand example with the sharp A overprint is printed on the flat plate

press as can be determined with a perforation gauge because it is perf 11. This stamp is Canal Zone No. 87. The two examples on the bottom are printed on the rotary press, and have perfs that measure 10 x 10 and 11 x 10-1/2. They are assigned Scott Nos. 99 and 104, respectively. With practice, one can get pretty good at identifying the gauge of the perfs by eye, though it is always good to have a simple perf gauge handy to be sure.

### **Distinguishing the flat and sharp A overprints**

The appearance of the tops of the A's is not the only characteristic that can be used to differentiate the overprint types, as the size of the letters is different as well. They are 2.2 mm high on the sharp A overprint, but only 2.0 mm on the flat A's. The word CANAL measures 11.5 mm on the sharp A, but only 11.0 mm on the flat A. Further, ZONE is 9.0 mm long on the sharp A version, but only 8.5 mm on the flat A. Even allowing for some variation of  $\pm 0.2$  mm depending on the age of the type and heaviness of the inking, these differences in size are readily discernible and can be used to identify the overprint type, should there be any doubt based on the appearance of the A's alone. The measurements are also valuable for detecting fakes.

for a given stamp. As a result, the spacing between CANAL and ZONE is not so useful in identifying the type of overprint, nor is it as helpful in detecting fakes on this series in contrast to its general utility on many Canal Zone stamps. At least that is true on the initial determination, though it may be helpful in confirming a diagnosis. The different characteristics of the different printings, the variations in CANAL ZONE spacings, and other characteristics of these definitives is treated thoroughly in Canal Zone Stamps, and will not be repeated here.

### **Flat A Overprint - Normal Variations in overprint**

There are several variations in the appearance of the overprint that are quite normal, and should not generate question of possible fakes. The first of these concerns the later printings of stamps in this series - particularly the second printings of the 1 cent and 2 cent values (Scott Nos. 71 and 73), plus all the 1/2 cent, 1-1/2 cent, and 14 cents values. The two different printings of the 2 cent value (Scott No. 73) are contrasted in Fig. 3., with the left hand stamp showing the clean-cut overprint which is jet black. The right hand stamp is from the second printing, on which the letters are worn and sometimes partially filled,

**Table 2. Summary of Characteristics of Flat and Sharp A Overprints**

#### **Characteristics of left example in Fig. 2. - flat A overprint.**

height of letters in overprint: 2.0 - 2.1 mm  
length of CANAL overprint: 11.0 - 11.2 mm  
length of ZONE overprint: 8.5 mm  
spacing between CANAL and ZONE: most commonly 9.2 mm

#### **Characteristics of right examples in Fig. 2. - sharp A overprint.**

height of letters in overprint: 2.2 - 2.4 mm  
length of CANAL overprint: 11.5 mm  
length of ZONE overprint: 9.0 mm  
spacing between CANAL and ZONE: variable, most commonly 9.0 mm

The spacing between the words CANAL and ZONE is normally 9.0 mm for the sharp As, and 9.2 mm for the flat A's, but this may be different for different stamps in the series, for different printings of a given stamp, and for different positions on the plate

and the ink is grayish black. (More details about the various printings, spacings, and other characteristics of these stamps can be found in Chapter 12 of *Canal Zone Stamps*.) Also, the CANAL to ZONE spacing on  
(continued on next page)



## Part II

### Fakes of the Flat A Stamps

#### Examples of fakes of stamps that do not exist - bogus stamps

The first examples of fakes included in this series on U.S. overprinted stamps in the post-Taft Agreement era are of stamps that do not exist. The first group shown in Fig. 5, are examples that appear to have a flat A overprint, but they are on a 3 cent Lincoln stamp. The 3 cent Lincoln was never overprinted with a flat A overprint, so these stamps cannot be genuine. Moreover, the stamp overprinted in each case is U.S. Scott number 635, the rotary press version with 11 x 10-1/2 perforations used to produce Canal Zone No. 102. But that stamp has the sharp A overprint. And as the overprints on these three stamps are different, there is an indication that there are many erroneous attempts to make a non-existent stamp. No genuine stamps exist that have a flat A overprint on a stamp printed on a rotary press. The stamps are properly termed bogus, though they could also be termed very poor fakes of the sharp A stamp Scott No. 102.

An additional set of attempts to make stamps that do not exist is shown in Fig. 6.



Fig. 3. Scott No. 73 - first and second printings.



Fig. 4. Expanded view - flat A overprint.

these stamps does vary significantly on the 1/2, 1-1/2 and 14 cent stamps.

Two other features found on stamps that are genuine are illustrated in Fig. 4.

This figure is an expanded view of the same stamp shown at the left of Fig. 3. The first of the features to pay attention to is that some fraction of the copies of several of the stamps with the sharp overprint in this series have something that looks like a sharp spur on the lower right serif of the first A. Finding this in the overprint on a stamp is pretty good evidence that the overprint is genuine, as I have not seen anything like it on a fake. The second feature concerns the letter C, which in genuine copies has the lower right portion sweeping upward to point directly at the portion of the top part of the C. Many fakes on this and other stamps have trouble getting the C to look right.



Fig. 5. Bogus 3 cent stamps with apparent flat A overprint.

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*(Continued on next page)*



**Fig. 6. Bogus flat A errors.**

These are four examples prepared using the same fake overprint. They are attempts to make errors that are not known to exist. On two, only the CANAL overprint is present. While examples of CANAL only overprints (ZONE missing) do exist on certain stamps, they do not exist on the 10 cent or 12 cent with the flat A overprint. One CANAL only variety does exist with the flat A overprint, on the 1 cent value as 71c, but it, like most of the sharp A CANAL only examples such as Scott Nos. 84a, 86h, and 91b are caused by a downward shift of the overprint when it was applied, which causes the CANAL overprint to be shifted toward the bottom of the stamp. On the CANAL only fakes shown in Fig. 6., the CANAL overprint appears in its normal position, which is what would be the case for an error created by a paper fold (over). In such cases, the ZONE part of the overprint usually appears on the back of the stamp, at least it does if it is the stamp itself that folded over and "blocked" the normal application of the overprint. There is no ZONE on the reverse of either of these bogus examples.

The other stamps in Fig. 6. appear to have inverted overprints. Neither the 10 cent nor the 15 cent flat A overprint is known inverted. The only stamp in this series that is known inverted is the 1 cent value, assigned Scott No. 71a. So these two are bogus as well.

Of course, most collectors hope they will find some previously undiscovered variety. To quash those hopes, one must examine the details of the

**Table 3. Characteristics of fakes in Fig. 6 - fake flat A overprint.**

height of letters in overprint: 1.9 mm
length of CANAL overprint: 10.8 - 11.0 mm
length of ZONE overprint: 8.0 mm
spacing between CANAL and ZONE: most commonly 9.0 mm
other characteristics: overprint fuzzy at the edges

overprint as given above. The characteristics confirm the first impression by eye: the overprint is small, the letters being shorter than on the genuine flat A overprint, and the definition of the edges is poor making the overprint seem blurry, in direct conflict with the characteristics of a genuine overprint.

A final note on these fakes. Those illustrated in Fig. 6. are part of a larger lot consisting of fakes that appeared on eBay in 2001. Many such lots offered by the same vendor have appeared, all consisting primarily of possible varieties that are not known, on U.S. stamps, on map stamps, and on postage dues. These evidently are from a cache of such fakes that is now being released on the market, and because they are not very good, they should not fool most collectors. Should anyone know any details of their origin, I would appreciate hearing from you.

Finally to bring closure to this introduction to fakes on U.S. overprinted stamps of 1923 and beyond, return to the item in Fig. 1 that opened this article. This one could be good, because 71a exists, a flat plate printed stamp with the flat A overprint inverted. But this overprint has the sharp A stamp. I have included this example here, rather than with the sharp A's because it is on a deep

green, flat plate U.S. stamp Scott No. 552. So it cannot be good because the flat plate 1 cent variety was never overprinted with the sharp A overprint. The only 1 cent green with a sharp A overprint that exists is CZ Scott No. 100, the rotary press stamp, and it is not known with an inverted overprint. So it is not a startling find of a new error variety; rather it is just an example of a bogus overprint.

Additional examples of fakes of the flat A overprint will be included in the next article in this series, including two types encountered fairly commonly.

### **Winners:**

**PHILADELPHIA NATIONAL STAMP EXHIBITION 2001**, Oct. 12-14, Philadelphia, PA. Silver to **Armand Cote**, "FAM 5 Inaugural Flight Covers and Cancellations". **Federation Centennial National Philatelic Exhibition**, Brisbane Queensland, Australia. Silver to **Robert J. Radley**, "Canal Zone". Congratulations to all.



## Postal Money Order

*continued from page 37*

### INFORMATION FOR THE HOLDER

1. SEND THIS ORDER TO THE PERSON TO WHOM THE MONEY IS TO BE PAID.
2. DO NOT MUTILATE THIS ORDER OR ALTER IT IN ANY WAY.
3. IF THE HOLDER DESIRES TO TRANSFER THIS ORDER TO ANOTHER PERSON HE WILL SIGN THE FOLLOWING FORM OF ENDORSEMENT.

and:

IF NOT PRESENTED FOR PAYMENT BEFORE THE EXPIRATION OF **ONE YEAR** FROM THE LAST DAY OF THE MONTH IN WHICH ISSUED AN ORDER BECOMES **INVALID BY LAW**, AND THE OWNER SHOULD PRESENT IT TO THE POSTMASTER AT A MONEY ORDER OFFICE, WHO WILL PROMPTLY FORWARD IT TO THE DIRECTOR OF POSTS, ANCON, CANAL ZONE, WITH AN APPLICATION FOR A DUPLICATE ORDER TO BE ISSUED IN LIEU THEREOF FREE OF CHARGE.

Across the center of the postal order form, also on its reverse side, there appeared a line of text reading:

(THIS SPACE FOR STAMPS OF BANKS; THESE ARE NOT REGARDED AS ENDORSEMENTS)

Canal Zone Postal Money Order No. 1 was issued by the Pedro Miguel Post Office, and was purchased by Gerald D. Bliss, Postmaster, in the amount of \$1.00 in the favor of C. E. Sheldon, then Postmaster at Sherman, New York, under whom Bliss had entered the United States Postal Service in 1901.

Upon its servicing by Bliss the money order received a double ring, circular date postmark, which Lawson P. Entwistle, in his handbook *The Postal markings of the Canal Zone*, classified as a Hs-6. (The Figure evidences that the first money order was purchased and signed by Bliss.) Also evidenced by the receiving postmark is that Bliss's money order took nine days in-transit to, by truck, rail and ship, to reach Postmaster Sheldon in Sherman, New York.

Their it was paid at the office of destination and returned to Bliss as a treasured memento.

Crede H. Calhoun, CZ Director of Posts between 1916 and 1947, recalled that on paydays as much as \$60,000 was paid in at the post offices for purchase of money orders. As a matter of interest, Ralph Emmett Avery, in America's Triumph in Panama, reported that by the end of Fiscal Year 1913, 213,316 money orders had been issued, which represented sales of \$4,883,624.13.

Other articles on Canal Zone Postal Money Orders appear in CZP:111:14; 123:15.

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## President's Report

*continued from page 37*

plowing by me through "closed files" on eBay, not an easy chore for this technical neophyte. My conclusion was that plate blocks in the Nos. 105-165 group do sell for a bit less than in our CZSG Mail Sales but that all the difference is made up by excessive (?) postage and handling costs. The fairly common (most of the Nos. 9-45 overprints) also sold for perhaps 15-20% less on eBay but condition and centering comparisons are problematical and, some days, any old dog will sell online. Who is the seller seems paramount, and it is my belief many people just will not bother with purchasing a \$5 problem. Better to wait for the \$50 problem to make it worth one's while. Should any reader care to do a qualitative study on the subject, be my guest.

It is hard to realize how utterly lacking in better CZ philately the public auction season of Oct. 1, 2000 to Oct. 1, 2001 has been. Much of what good material that came to the block was offered in mail bid sales, which do not publish any prices realized. As one prominent member said to me, "you have to wait until someone dies". That was quite a brick of a CZSG Mail Sale catalog which you received in December, wasn't it? Unlike eBay and many public auctions/mail bid sales, phrases like "caveat emptor" and "know your seller or else" pretty much do not seem to apply to the annual CZSG sale.

I look forward to seeing some of you at the CZSG regional meeting at **ARIPEX** in Mesa Arizona in February.

## Philatelic Show 200

PHILATELIC SHOW 2002, sponsored by the Northeastern Federation of Stamp Clubs will be held at the Holiday Inn at Boxborough Woods in Boxborough MA on 3-5 May 2002. One of the two themes for the year is Canal Zone. We are fervently hoping to fill 100 frames on Canal Zone, and invite anyone with a 1-10 frame CZ exhibit to participate

The official show prospectus and entry form is available from the Exhibit Chairman, Guy R. Dillaway at P.O. Box 181, Weston MA 02493 (E-mail Barbtax@aol.com), or from Alan P. Bentz, 52 Cove Road, Stonington CT 06378 (a.bentz@worldnet.att.net). See also the sponsor's web site at <http://nefed.org>.

As part of the CZSG 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, we will have a Study Group / COPAPHIL regional meeting on Saturday, May 4, at 10am The program will be announced on the CZSG web site at <http://CZSG.org>.

Alan Bentz



## Bridgeless Canal Zone Thatcher Ferry Bridge Stamp on a Piece???

By Julius Grigore, Jr.

On October 12, 1962 the Canal Zone Postal Service issued a 4 cent black and silver commemorative stamp to honor the dedication of the Thatcher Ferry Bridge, now known as the Bridge of the Americas.

While 775,000 of this stamp were printed by the Giori press process, which requires two passes to print the black and silver colors, somehow or other a press sheet of 200 stamps, consisting of 4 panes of 50 stamps each, were printed without the silver bridge.

The story about this error is well told by Brewster. Plass, and Salz in their comprehensive work, *Canal Zone Stamps*. They also told about how the sheet of 200 stamps, all postally unused, was disposed of. One pane of 50 was intentionally destroyed by the Canal Zone Postal Agency; another was given to the National Postage Stamp Collection at the Smithsonian Institution. A third pane was donated to the Canal Zone Library-Museum (then an organization administered by the Panama Canal Company, but now referred as the Technical Resources Center, Panama Canal Authority). The fourth sheet, which had been inadvertently included in a shipment to the H. E. Harris & Company, Boston, was broken into one block of 10, several blocks of four, and into singles. All the stamps from the Harris pane were sold to philatelists.

All of the above Thatcher Ferry Bridge stamps mentioned were mint condition. What is reported here is a postally used "bridgeless" Thatcher Ferry Bridge stamp, on a piece as shown in above.

This bridgeless stamp forms the upper stamp of a vertical pair of the Thatcher Ferry Bridge stamps. The piece is also franked with one Scott No. 138, 2-cent Roosevelt, and a pair of Scott No. 139, 5-cent Stevens, Canal Zone stamps. All the stamps on the piece were postmarked at Balboa Post Office on September 26, 1965,



being struck twice with a circular-date stamp identified in Lawson Entwistle's book, *The Postal Markings of the Canal Zone*, as a Hs-14i, Killer "1" cancel.

The heavier first strike was on the left Stevens stamp. The second strike was on the right Stevens, lower Roosevelt, and the pair of Thatcher Ferry Bridge stamps. The second strike appears weaker since the postal clerk apparently did not re-ink his canceling device before making it.

This piece was obtained in a dealer's inexpensive box at a **SARAPEX** Stamp Show, Sarasota, Florida circa 1975. That it was bridgeless was not detected for a year or two after its purchase. Thereupon, it was sent to the APS for expertizing. It was their opinion that it was not a genuine "bridgeless" stamp.

When the "bridgeless" stamp is analyzed under magnification, very minute portions of the upper arch of the silver bridge on the stamp are evident. In addition, there is no evidence that the paper of the stamp had been disturbed or that the silver bridge had been physically removed. In addition, the heavier envelope type paper on which the stamps were affixed shows no evidence of having had wetness. However, there may exist

some chemical means to eradicate the silver color off of paper.

A postally used bridgeless Thatcher Ferry Bridge stamp has never been reported. Thus the question arises as to why only a single copy of such a stamp has appeared since the issue of stamps with and without a silver bridge in 1962? If this stamp had been altered why would anyone confine themselves to removing the silver colored bridge from only one of the stamps in the pair?

Or, could it be that during the Giori printing process the silver color (bridge) was not added to some of the stamps on a pane? Or is this variety the result of a paper-fold or foreign matter obscuring the printing of the silver color. If so, could it be that other bridgeless stamps escaped detection by the printing plant, Canal Zone Philatelic Agency, or post office personnel.

In light of these possible consequences, Canal Zone philatelists should re-inspect their collections to determine if other bridgeless Thatcher Ferry Bridge stamps can be reported.

Should readers have comments about the above conjectures, the Editor would welcome their remarks.

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